



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**INDICTMENT IN "OPERATION TREBUCHET" IS ANNOUNCED BY U.S. ATTORNEY  
ANTHONY J. JENKINS, U.S. DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION SPECIAL  
AGENT IN CHARGE JEROME M. HARRIS, VIRGIN ISLANDS POLICE  
COMMISSIONER ELTON LEWIS, AND U.S. POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE  
ASSISTANT INSPECTOR IN CHARGE FRANK SILVA**

United States Attorney Anthony J. Jenkins, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration ("DEA") Special Agent in Charge ("SAC") Jerome M. Harris and Virgin Islands Police Department ("VIPD") Commissioner Elton Lewis and U.S. Postal Inspection Service ("USPIS") Assistant Inspector in Charge Frank Silva announced today an indictment against nineteen defendants in an investigation named "Operation Trebuchet."

This operation targeted an international cocaine, crack cocaine and marijuana drug trafficking organization based on St. Croix. The organization allegedly obtained cocaine from St. Maarten, and marijuana from sources in the mainland United States. A St. Croix base of operations was located in Estate Castle Coakley. Zacheaus Blake, 32, Blaine Claxton, 25, and Kalif Berry, 28, of St. Croix were primary targets of the investigation. Zacheaus Blake's mother, Shelia Blake, 57, and his sister, Karen Blake, 35, also of St. Croix, were also indicted in the case. A total of twenty-five people have been indicted or arrested to date in the investigation.

The investigation began in July 2003 and has led to several arrests and seizures over the last three years. The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (“HIDTA”) Task Force executed over 23 search warrants on St. Croix and other locations during the investigation. The Task Force seized trafficking amounts of crack cocaine, cocaine hydrochloride, and marijuana during the course of the investigation. In addition, six weapons, several bulletproof vests, VIPD uniforms, ski masks and over Sixty Thousand Dollars (\$60,000) in U.S. currency were also seized during the course of executing search warrants. The HIDTA Task Force also seized several vehicles and two boats during the course of this investigation.

The investigation revealed that the organization obtained cocaine from St. Maarten and marijuana from the mainland United States. U.S. postal workers, Charles Francis, 34, of the Kingshill Post Office, and Valencia Thomas, 33, of the Richmond Post Office, participated by assisting them with the shipments of marijuana through the U.S. mail.

Frank Silva, Assistant Inspector in Charge for the USPIS, said that the use of the U.S. Mail to protect illegal activities was the number one priority of the Postal Service.

DEA Resident Agent in Charge (“RAC”) Gene Hawk stated that marijuana is a very lucrative business and varies greatly depending upon the quality of the product. Marijuana is a “gate-way” drug which means that many young adults try marijuana with friends or when it is offered by adults and this initial use later leads new users to alternative and more powerful drugs. Frequently, the false perception that marijuana is not harmful leads people to try other drugs such as cocaine and crack cocaine. RAC Hawk also noted that drug trafficking organizations should not be tolerated by the citizens of the Virgin Islands, and should be reported to the VIPD and federal law enforcement when citizens become aware of their existence. Anyone who wishes to

provide information to the HIDTA Task Force is encouraged to call (340) 692-9500 or (340) 774-2398.

United States Virgin Islands Deputy Territorial Marshal Lorel Sackey, 41, was indicted in this case for using communications facilities in furtherance of drug trafficking. Sackey is alleged to have provided information which aided the effectiveness of the drug trafficking organization. Other Virgin Islands residents who were indicted include St. Clair Liburd, 20, Randy Simon, 21, Delma Matthew, 25, Akilia Roberts, 27, Shermaine Peters, 38, Karl Christian, 24, Adilia Magrass, 25 and Akeem Bloodmar, 21, all of whom are from St. Croix, and Shusta Gumbs, 28, a resident of St. Thomas. Two defendants named in the indictment will be identified at a later date.

The investigation was a joint effort between DEA and the Virgin Islands Police Department, the two agencies that comprise the DEA-led HIDTA Task Force in St. Croix. Agencies assisting with the case included the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms ("ATF"), the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, the Blue Lightning Marine Unit, the Office of Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), and the Federal Bureau of Investigation ("FBI").

DEA SAC Harris stated that the ability of Federal and local law enforcement to work together is the basis for the success of Operation Trebuchet. Moreover, the community is the chief benefactor of our efforts. SAC Harris added that he appreciates the proactive role that Commissioner Elton Lewis has assumed by becoming the Chairman of the HIDTA Executive Board which has been a conduit through which resources are channeled. These resources have helped to reduce drug-related violence in the United States Virgin Islands.

U.S. Attorney Jenkins emphasized that an indictment is not evidence of guilt, and that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until guilt is established in court.

**ATTENTION TO THE MEDIA:**

DEA RAC Hawk has provided audio comments for use by print, visual, or audio media. The comments can be accessed by media members by dialing 1-888-557-6494, and upon being prompted, dialing mailbox number 709.